

## ENGLISH BIBLES

Source for following excerpts:

This English Bible History Article & Timeline is ©2002 by author & editor: John L. Jeffcoat III. Special thanks is also given to Dr. Craig H. Lampe for his valuable contributions to the text. This page may be freely reproduced or quoted, in whole or in part, in print or electronically, under the one condition that prominent credit must be given to "WWW.GREATSITE.COM" as the source.

The [first hand-written English language Bible manuscripts](#) were produced in the **1380's** AD by [John Wycliffe](#), an Oxford professor, scholar, and theologian.

[William Tyndale](#) was the Captain of the Army of Reformers, and was their spiritual leader. Tyndale holds the distinction of being the first man to ever print the New Testament in the English language. In **1525-1526** the Tyndale New Testament became the first printed edition of the scripture in the English language. Subsequent printings of the [Tyndale New Testament in the 1530's](#) were often elaborately illustrated.

Having God's Word available to the public in the language of the common man, English, would have meant disaster to the Roman church. Many copies of Tyndale's New Testament were burned to keep them from the people.

Tyndale was caught: betrayed by an Englishman that he had befriended. Tyndale was incarcerated for 500 days before he was strangled and burned at the stake in **1536**. Tyndale's last words were, "*Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes*". This prayer would be answered just three years later in **1539**, when King Henry VIII finally allowed, and even funded, the printing of an English Bible known as the "Great Bible".

[Myles Coverdale](#) and John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers had remained loyal disciples the last six years of Tyndale's life, and they carried the English Bible project forward and even accelerated it. Coverdale finished translating the Old Testament, and in **1535** he printed the first complete Bible in the English language, making use of Luther's German text and the Latin as sources. Thus, the first complete English Bible was printed on **October 4, 1535**, and is known as the **Coverdale Bible**.

**John Rogers**

[John Rogers](#) went on to print the second complete English Bible in **1537**. It was, however, the first English Bible translated from the original Biblical languages of Hebrew & Greek. He printed it under the pseudonym "**Thomas Matthew**", (an assumed name that had actually been used by Tyndale at one time) as a considerable part of this Bible was the translation of Tyndale, whose writings had been condemned by the English authorities. It is a composite made up of Tyndale's Pentateuch and New Testament (1534-1535 edition) and Coverdale's Bible and some of Roger's own translation of the text. It remains known most commonly as the [Matthew-Tyndale Bible](#). It went through a nearly identical [second-edition printing in 1549](#).

### **Thomas Cranmer**

In **1539**, [Thomas Cranmer](#), the Archbishop of Canterbury, hired Myles Coverdale at the bequest of [King Henry VIII](#) to publish the "Great Bible". It became the first English Bible authorized for public use, as it was distributed to every church, chained to the pulpit, and a reader was even provided so that the illiterate could hear the Word of God in plain English. It would seem that William Tyndale's last wish had been granted...just three years after his martyrdom. Cranmer's Bible, published by Coverdale, was known as the [Great Bible](#) due to its great size: a large pulpit folio measuring over 14 inches tall. Seven editions of this version were printed between April of **1539** and December of **1541**.

King Henry VIII broke away from the Roman Catholic Church taking England out from under Rome's religious control, and declaring himself as the reigning head of State to also be the new head of the Church. This new branch of the Christian Church, neither Roman Catholic nor truly Protestant, became known as the Anglican Church or the Church of England. King Henry acted essentially as its "Pope". His first act was to further defy the wishes of Rome by funding the printing of the scriptures in English... the first legal English Bible... just for spite.

After King Henry VIII, King Edward VI took the throne, and after his death, the reign of [Queen "Bloody" Mary](#) was the next obstacle to the printing of the Bible in English. She was possessed in her quest to return England to the Roman Church. In **1555**, John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers and Thomas Cranmer were both burned at the stake. Mary went on to burn reformers at the stake by the hundreds for the "crime" of being a Protestant. This era was known as the Marian Exile, and the refugees fled from England with little hope of ever seeing their home or friends again.

The Geneva Bible itself retains over **90%** of William Tyndale's original English translation.

the Geneva Bible (which is textually 95% the same as the King James Version, but 50 years older than the King James Version,

The New Testament was completed in 1557, and the complete Bible was first published in 1560. It became known as the [Geneva Bible](#)

The Geneva holds the honor of being the first Bible taken to America, and the Bible of the Puritans and Pilgrims. It is truly the "Bible of the Protestant Reformation."

[Great Bible](#) of 1539 —which was the only version then legally authorized for use in Anglican worship

In **1539**, [Thomas Cranmer](#), the Archbishop of Canterbury, hired Myles Coverdale at the bequest of [King Henry VIII](#) to publish the "Great Bible". It became the first English Bible authorized for public use, as it was distributed to every church, chained to the pulpit, and a reader was even provided so that the illiterate could hear the Word of God in plain English. It would seem that William Tyndale's last wish had been granted...just three years after his martyrdom. Cranmer's Bible, published by Coverdale, was known as the [Great Bible](#) due to its great size: a large pulpit folio measuring over 14 inches tall. Seven editions of this version were printed between April of **1539** and December of **1541**

## The Various Editions of the 1611 A.V.

If someone decides to produce a "new Bible version", then they must also convince Christians that there is a NEED and a justifiable CAUSE for the new version. One of the deceitful excuses being used today for producing new versions is that *the King James Bible has been revised several times since 1611, and that a new revision is needed once again*. While spreading this piece of deceitful misinformation, the KJV critics hold their breath, hoping that no one will be intelligent enough to ask for specific details about these "revisions". The many revisions that have occurred since 1881 bear NO RESEMBLANCE to the various EDITIONS of the KJV prior to 1881. The modern revisors are just trying to justify their sins!

There were only FOUR actual EDITIONS of the King James Bible produced after 1611: *1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769*. These were not translations (like the new versions SINCE 1881), and they really weren't even "revisions".

The 1629 edition was simply an effort to correct *printing errors*, and two of the original King James translators assisted in the work.

The 1638 edition of the KJV also dealt with printing errors, especially words and clauses overlooked by the printers. About 72% of the textual corrections in the KJV were done by 1638, only 27 years after the first printing.

Please bear in mind the fact that printing was a very laborious task prior to 1800. Publishing a flawless work was almost impossible. Even today, with computers and advanced word processors, printing errors are still frequently made. Imagine what it was like in the 1600's!

Then, in 1762 and 1769, two final editions of the KJV were published. Both of these involved *spelling changes*, which became necessary as the English language became more stabilized and spelling rules were established.

There were no new *translations*, and there were really no new *revisions* published in 1629, 1638, 1762, or 1769. These were simply EDITIONS of the 1611 KJV, which corrected printing errors and spelling. Those who try to equate these editions with the modern translations are just being deceitful or stupid--*or both*. The many other so-called "revisions" of the KJV that occurred in 1613, 1616, 1617, and 1743 are nothing more than running changes and touch-up work at the printers. The REAL revisions and translations do not start appearing until 1881 (RV) and 1901 (ASV). So if some punk walks up with a smirky grin on his face and asks you, "So which King James Bible do you have, the 1611, the 1629, the 1638, the 1762, or the 1769?", you can simply state that you have a *1769 edition of the King James 1611 Authorized Version*.